

Ultimately, in order to understand the theory of the plan, the strategy and the way it was likely to be implemented, I read the entire structure of plans relating to nuclear war for the Pacific. This meant, to give you an idea of this, starting with the GEOP (General Emergency Operations Plan) which was up-dated yearly and was the CINCPAC Plan. Below this were the component plans of the Army, Navy and Air Force, the USAPPAC, CINCPAC Fleet and PACAF. Below them, for example, in the Air Force case, a Seventh Air Force Plan, ^{then} this going down to Air Division, then finally plans relating to an individual squadron. In the Navy case we go down to the CINCPACFleet, down to the 7th Fleet and ultimately to carrier division and individual carriers and pilots. In the Army there were also what were called subordinate unified commands, in which a particular commander would command the fleet services in a particular area. There was the Taiwan Defense Command

and the Korean Command which also had the U.N. Command, called CINCUNC or COMUSK (Commander of U.S. Forces, Korea) and in the Army case you would be going down ultimately to the plan for divisions and battalions. So I would have read in many cases, following a particular service line down, seven or eight levels of plans with increasing specificity and decreasing geographical coverage in terms of targets and units involved.

All of these would use overlapping language. They would start with a statement of objectives and of the concept of the plan, strategy, and the task involved. The language of course would pretty much be unified; it was intended to be uniform from top to bottom. But both because of secrecy and by bureaucratic division of labor, there was no process of review of these plans that involved looking at the entire structure of plans; or in fact, looking at anything but the next lower level of plans, which was based on one's own unit's plan and, of course, the next higher level of plan on which the planner based his own plan. So typically a person would be aware of three levels of the plan, but not more.

I discovered by questioning people experienced in the process - and many of these planners had worked in Washington in the JCS - that there was no agency throughout that did a review of more than these two or three levels, or at the most, four levels. The effect

of this, I discovered, were astounding discrepancies if one compared levels even three or four levels apart.

Changes that would appear subtle from one plan to the next, from one level to the next, in the wording of objectives or in the assignment of tasks would be magnified as they went down several levels. So if you compared, let's say, four levels apart, the task that a carrier division or even the Seventh Fleet might find itself assigned by its planners and commander to carry out would be markedly different from the task envisioned for that area and situation at the level of CINCPAC or the JCS.

There was no reason to believe that the higher level commanders were aware of these discrepancies. As a matter of fact, people at the lower level were not aware in many cases that there were these enormous discrepancies, because no one ever had access in general. Except for that one cage in the Pacific there was probably no other place in the Pacific that collected all of these plans in one place and had the for higher level plans with which to compare one's own plans. You could only compare with your next higher level, which of course you were always interpreting to meet your own circumstances to some degree.

One aspect of this, a gross aspect, was that Pacific Forces from top to bottom were focused on a conflict with China, since with the range limitations of their weapons

and the geography of the Sino-Soviet Bloc almost no Russian target lay within their range except for a few in the Vladivostok and Siberian area. Once you destroyed Vladivostok, war with Russia was no longer "interesting" to the CINCPAC Forces, whereas China, although offering few really "lucrative" industrial targets, loomed as a large land mass suitable for attack and largely within reach, with the additional feature that the population was heavily concentrated in the seaboard area close to the Seventh Fleet carriers. In contrast to China, CINCPAC planners were unable to get really interested in the question of fighting Russia, although of course this was the almost exclusive preoccupation in the late '50's of Washington, and in the European area.

When I later became aware of the provisions JCS Joint Strategic Capability Plan which governed all of the theater plans, I found that, in principle, provision was made for conflicts that involved only Russia. But I had by then discovered that no such provision was made either in plan or in practice in any area of Pacific operations. This omission was reflected in writing, it was reflected in the way training was conducted and weapons were allocated, but also in the attitude of all of the commanders and officers involved. When the very question was raised of the possibility of fighting Russia "rather than" China, they would express only bafflement, horror, almost physical

nausea at the thought; and they would express this in such terms as: "I just cannot conceive of their doing such an unbelievably stupid thing as to take on the Russians and not also the Chinese."

Very simply, there were neither plans nor capability in the short run, I discovered, to attack only Russian targets and not Chinese targets. By that I mean that on a runway in Guam or Okinawa or Korea, planes would be targeted in a fashion on the alert runway - ready to take off on ten minutes alert - such that one plane with a 1.1 megaton bomb slung under it would be targeted for the Vladivostok area and a plane next to it on the runway, which would be taking off at a few seconds interval, would be targeted and trained and briefed and practiced for a target in China. In other words, planes within a ten-man alert section on a given runway would be scrambled in terms of their national targets. And because this targeting was handled by the crew on computer readouts which did not identify whether the target would hit China or Russia, but merely gave coordinates, there was no way, either manually or in simple terms of computer programs, to unscramble the targets and assure that, say, only planes 7, 6 and 11, which were targeted for Russia, should take off out of that alert force.

It had never occurred to anyone that I ever met in the Pacific that such an order might come down, and not only had no provision ever been made for it, but the provisions made

for general nuclear war were such that there was no physical way in which to bring about an attack only on Russian targets or only on Chinese targets.

Omitting Russia was, in a way a little easier because so many targets were listed for China that some entire airfields would be targeted only on China or couldn't reach Russia. The fields in the South Pacific had no Russian targets because they couldn't reach Russia. As I discussed this with planners I discovered, in practical terms, that if you seriously wanted only to attack China, for example, you could simply cut out an entire airfield in some cases and thus, you would lose some Chinese targets but you would cut out all the Russian targets that were out of range of other fields. But if you wanted to hit only Russia there was almost no airfield that was targeted only on Russian targets. You could cut out the CINCPAC forces entirely. Of course, you would do that only if it occurred to you that this might be a problem. I never found anyone in Washington who had any idea that there was this kind of problem. To show the kind of physical ways this showed up, in many targeting maps in operations and plan centers and command posts in the Pacific - I am talking about airfields and command posts in Okinawa, Formosa, Guam, Tokyo, and I was on board several carriers and command ships in the Pacific - in each one of these places you would have a map showing nuclear war targets. It would be their most secret map, usually

covered by a screen or a curtain drawn over it when other people were being briefed in the room who did not have access to these nuclear targets. On those maps, typically, the map did not show the boundary between China and Russia. So you could not tell simply by inspecting the arrows on the map, the pins on the map that indicated targets of different category, whether they were in China or Russia. In some maps, for example, I would find a piece of colored string put on for convenience, for aesthetic reasons perhaps, indicating roughly the boundary of Russia and China. But that meant that a high level planner in that division could not, just by inspecting those targets, decide which ones to pull.

The next question would be, could he determine from the target quickly what tail number - which was the way they designated airplanes - was assigned to that particular target? The answer was that it was an extremely laborious process. It was not something you do in minutes or hours. It would probably be a matter of days or weeks to sort out what planes were assigned to what target; and that meant that if this was anything like an emergency or surprise attack situation, where we were being attacked, it was simply physically impossible to do that kind of work.

But that was only one part of it. The other part was the question--Given the attitude and preconceptions in the minds of operators and alert officers, how were

they likely to interpret various orders that came down? Let me give you one aspect of this. For reasons that I will go into later, "general war" was defined in the Joint Chiefs capabilities plan as war with Russia. General war alerting orders thus tended to have simply the character: "execute general war plans." If general war should be decided on as a result of a conflict with Russia, quite possibly arising out of the Berlin Corridor as in '61, it would have led to general war execute orders which were prewritten and prepositioned. For both speed and security the text of these orders, omitting date and time of execution, would be prepositioned with the lowest levels of command all over the world. Thus the actual execute order could be sent in the clear, without being coded, for greater speed and reliability, and would simply take the form: "Execute Order No. XYZ," giving a date and time of execution. The person receiving that would look up the plan referred to in a "library" - actually, usually, a looseleaf folder of prepositioned messages - and would fill in the date and time. Moreover, the execute orders themselves, in the Pentagon, were prewritten, except for some last minute details so that an officer in the Joint Staff would fill in certain blanks, literally blanks in the message, before he sent that out.

Thus you could predict very closely how a given decision at the top would be reflected in the wording of

messages that would go down to subordinate layers of command, because in each layer these messages, for speed and reliability and for ability to transmit in the clear, were prepositioned. As soon as the few blanks were filled in, you knew the exact wording of the whole message. You could make, then, not guesses but judgments near certainty as to how those messages would be acted on, if you knew the preconceptions or the understanding of these officers below and the plans and preparations they had made for carrying them out.

There was no blank in the execute orders going out from Washington, at that time, specifying countries to be hit under conditions of general war. Yet as I have said, the general war planners - and I spoke to the very highest levels of planners in Washington - had no awareness of the general war plans distributed throughout the Pacific which said, in effect, "In the event of general war, you will expend most of your weapons on China plus whatever can reach Russian targets on the few Russian targets within range." This was reiterated at every level. Even if there had been understanding of the intent in one level of the order from Washington - to hit Russia, say, but not China - and some attempt to correct for this, one could show that it would almost surely be aborted by the execute orders and responses at lower levels. Moreover, if it was decided

20

not to hit China one would have a choice either of hitting nothing at all or hitting both Russia and China nevertheless. And in general war discrimination is not to be expected; aside from the fact that it was the attitude of all of these officers, without exception, that an order by their superior to hit only Russia amounted to insanity. They were literally shocked by the suggestion.

The upshot of all this was that one could make an extremely strong case that the result of an order by the President or the Joint Chiefs of Staff to hit only military targets in Russia - and the people in Washington were able to conceive of such a situation, there was even some provision for it - with near certainty a result of that order would be the destruction of all cities in China. And this without anyone in the level of command believing that he was doing anything against his orders, or certainly, against the interests of the United States. This would involve, in Russia and China together, the deaths of 370,000,000 people.

2